

Developing the first shared online curriculum for veterinary undergraduate learning and teaching in animal welfare and ethics in Australia and New Zealand

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The need for undergraduate teaching of Animal Welfare and Ethics (AWE) in Australian and New Zealand veterinary courses reflects - increasing community concerns and expectations about AWE; the demands of veterinary accreditation; and fears that, unless students encounter AWE as part of their formal education, as veterinarians they will be relatively unaware of the discipline of animal welfare science. To address this need, we assembled leaders in the field of AWE education from the eight veterinary schools in Australia and New Zealand and used modified deliberative polling to identify resources that can address the learning and teaching needs of undergraduate veterinary students in AWE. This paper describes the role of the poll in developing the first shared online curriculum resource for veterinary graduate learning and teaching in AWE in Australia and New Zealand. The poll highlighted the importance of three core learning and teaching strategies to be used in the new resource: scenario-based learning; a quality of animal life assessment tool; and the so-called 'Human Continuum' discussion platform. The aim of this online resource is to ensure Australian and New Zealand veterinary graduates have the knowledge, and the research, communication and critical reasoning skills, to fulfil the AWE role demanded of them by contemporary society, both nationally and internationally.